



## **Cambridge Historical Commission, City of Cambridge**

831 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139 Telephone: 617/349-4683

Fax: 617/349-3116, TTY: 617/349-6112, E-mail: [hystcomm@cambridgema.gov](mailto:hystcomm@cambridgema.gov)

URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/~Historic>

February 27, 2006

To: Non-Profit Organizations Owning Property in Cambridge

From: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director  
Cambridge Historical Commission

Re: Funding Opportunity for Building Rehabilitation

The Cambridge Historical Commission is requesting proposals for Institutional Preservation Grants, which provide funds to qualified non-profit organizations for rehabilitation or restoration of significant Cambridge buildings or structures.

In 2001, Cambridge voters accepted the terms of the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) and agreed to establish a Community Preservation Fund to support the “acquisition, creation and preservation” of affordable housing, open space, and historic structures. Since then, 10% of the funds generated through this program have been set aside for historic preservation purposes, which includes the “acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources.”

Cambridge’s CPA-funded historic preservation activities have involved restoration of historic public buildings and landscapes and support for the Historical Commission’s Preservation Grant program for affordable housing rehabilitation, which is now in its 30th year. This program helps preserve affordable housing by making grants to low- and moderate-income homeowners and to local housing rehabilitation agencies for exterior restoration projects, such as removing artificial siding and restoring original architectural details.

The Commission’s Institutional Preservation Grant (IPG) program, now in its second year, extends the Commission’s Preservation Grant program, but with some significant differences.

- Applicants to the IPG program must be non-profit organizations.
- The building or structure for which assistance is being sought must be significant on the local, state, or national level for its architecture or associations with important persons, organizations, or events.
- The work must constitute rehabilitation or restoration rather than ordinary maintenance.
- Applicants must demonstrate that they have the financial and managerial resources to enable projects to proceed expeditiously to completion.

The maximum Institutional Preservation Grant per project will consist of an outright grant of up to \$25,000, and a further grant of up to 50% of additional documented costs for a maximum disbursement of \$50,000. Amounts over the initial \$25,000 grant must be matched by the applicant.

- Actual grant amounts will be determined by the Commission on the basis of the selection criteria and with regard to the availability of funds, and are likely to be less than the total cost of the work even if the total project cost is less than \$25,000; that is, some matching may be required even for projects costing less than \$25,000.
- Grants will be made on a reimbursement basis and will not be paid until the approved work is completed and documented to the satisfaction of the Commission.
- The Commission may require that the owner enter into a 30-year preservation restriction that will protect the property as though it were designated as a landmark.

If your organization is interested in applying for an Institutional Preservation Grant, please review the attached guidelines and complete the enclosed application, describing the nature of your organization, the building or structure for which the grant is requested, the proposed scope of work, and the estimated cost. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Commission staff, which may request additional information, and then presented to the Cambridge Historical Commission for a determination of significance and concurrence on the amount and terms of the proposed grant. (Applications from previous recipients will be considered, but may be assigned a lower priority than new applications.) Once a contract has been signed, recipients will have eighteen months from that date to complete projects and seek reimbursement.

enclosure

## **Guidelines for Institutional Preservation Grants (IPG) funded under the Historic Resources Community Preservation Fund in Cambridge**

### ***1. Eligible Applicants***

Eligible applicants are private, non-profit organizations that are recognized under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code and that are the owners or long-term lessees of an eligible historic resource.

### ***2. Eligible Historic Resources***

Eligible historic resources can be buildings, structures, or other real property. To be considered for grants under the provisions of the Community Preservation Act, historic resources must be either listed on the State Register of Historic Places or be determined by the Cambridge Historical Commission to be significant in the history, archaeology, architecture or culture of the City of Cambridge.

To determine the eligibility of an historic resource and a proposed project for Institutional Preservation Grant assistance, interested applicants must submit an application form that:

- Describes the location and nature of the building for which assistance is requested. The Historical Commission will ascertain the State Register status of the property, or make a determination as to the historical, archaeological, architectural or cultural significance of the resource,
- Demonstrates that the project is eligible for CPA consideration as defined below, and
- Includes a description of the type and scope of work for the project proposed, with preliminary cost estimates and schematic plans where appropriate.

### ***3. Eligible Projects***

According to the CPA statute, CPA assistance may be used for the “acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources,” which include the following:

- Obtaining a historic resource by “gift, purchase, devise, grant, rental, rental purchase, lease or otherwise,” but not including “a taking by eminent domain;”
- Preserving by protecting “personal or real property from injury, harm or destruction, but not including maintenance;” or
- Rehabilitating the historic resource, which is defined as “the remodeling, reconstruction and making of extraordinary repairs to historic resources . . . for the purposes of making such historic resources . . . functional for their intended use.” Rehabilitation may include work done to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal, state or local building or access codes. “With respect to historic resources, rehabilitation shall . . . comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.”

Maintenance (defined as the “upkeep of real or personal property”) is not an eligible grant expense. For example, painting and routine repairs in preparation for painting are considered maintenance and are not an eligible expenditure. Cambridge’s Institutional Preservation Grants can only be used for exterior restoration, ADA compliance, or structural work

necessary to ensure the continued integrity of the building or structure. Interior restoration work will not be supported.

#### ***4. Historical Commission Review of Projects Proposed for CPA Consideration***

The Cambridge Historical Commission will use the following criteria to review letters of intent for eligible projects proposed for Institutional Preservation Grant assistance:

- Level of historical, archaeological, architectural or cultural significance of the property;
- Appropriateness of the proposed acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration for the property;
- Anticipated public benefit to users and community residents;
- Potential for loss or destruction of the property without a grant;
- Demonstrated financial need; and
- Administrative and financial management capabilities of the applicant.

Applicants with projects that are determined eligible for IPG assistance may be asked to submit more detailed proposals, including plans and specifications for the work. The Commission will review applications at a regular monthly public meeting. Grant awards will be based on an evaluation of the project in light of the criteria above and on the quality and completeness of the final submission. Applications from previous grant recipients will be considered, but may be assigned a lower priority than new applications.

#### ***5. Historical Commission Review and Monitoring of Final Construction Plans and Specifications***

The Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission or his designee must review and approve final construction plans and specifications before the applicant begins work or applies for a building permit. The Commission's review is intended to ensure that the project complies with the Guidelines for Rehabilitation stated in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/guide.htm>).

#### ***6. Preservation Restriction***

As a condition of receiving an Institutional Preservation Grant for a property not already protected by a preservation restriction, designated as a landmark, or located in an historic district or neighborhood conservation district, the owner may be required to enter into a preservation restriction that will protect it for a term of thirty years.

Section 12 of the Community Preservation Act requires that "a real property interest that is purchased with monies from the Community Preservation Fund shall be bound by a permanent deed restriction that meets the requirements of chapter 184, limiting the use of the interest to the purpose for which it was acquired."

Preservation restrictions acquired by the Cambridge Historical Commission will require the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Nonapplicability or Hardship for any alteration, construction or demolition of the publicly visible exterior architectural features of the restricted property, as if it is located in an historic district established under M.G.L. Ch. 40C.

### ***7. Allowable Costs for Institutional Preservation Grant Projects***

Customarily, Preservation Grant funds have been used to leverage the efforts of individuals and agencies by supporting the incremental cost of historic preservation activities, and have not funded the entire cost of the project. For example, the Commission has helped defray the cost differential between asphalt shingles and slate roofing, between installing plain posts and reproducing appropriate porch columns, or between vinyl siding and wood clapboards and trim. Institutional Preservation Grant projects will operate on the same principle, as follows:

*Rehabilitation Projects:* Requests may be submitted for construction activities including stabilization, protection, rehabilitation, and restoration. Grant funding can be used to cover the costs of material and labor necessary to ensure the preservation, safety, and accessibility of historic cultural resources. Development of universal access is allowable as part of a larger project.

- Allowable costs: Out-of-pocket expenses for building preservation or restoration, building code compliance, and barrier-free access where historic fabric is directly involved. Activities that secure or maintain a weatherproof shell will be given priority.
- Non-allowable costs: Projects consisting of routine maintenance (including painting), upgrading of mechanical systems (i.e., heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing), renovation of non-historic spaces, or construction of additions will not be considered. Institutional Preservation Grant funds may not be used to support restoration or repair of interior spaces used for worship. Architectural/engineering fees are not eligible for funding. The Commission will not reimburse grantees for the value of donated labor.

*Acquisition Projects:* Requests may be submitted to acquire properties listed on the State Register of Historic Places that are imminently threatened with inappropriate alteration or destruction.

### ***8. Grant Amounts***

The maximum Institutional Preservation Grant for any single project will be an outright grant of up to \$25,000, with an allowance for a further grant of up to 50% of additional documented costs for a maximum disbursement of \$50,000. The Commission may reimburse grantees for 100% of pre-approved eligible costs up to the amount of the flat grant, and for 50% of eligible documented costs above the initial \$25,000, up to the maximum allowed disbursement.

Actual grant amounts will be determined by the Commission on the basis of the selection criteria and with regard to the availability of funds. The actual grant amount offered may be less than the total cost of the work, even for projects costing less than \$25,000.

All grants will be made on a reimbursement basis and will not be paid until the approved work is completed and documented to the satisfaction of the Commission.

February 28, 2006